

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: September 18, 2000

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Emily Hoffnar, FCC, CCB, IAD

SUBJECT: Docket 99-294

TO: Office of the Secretary

RECEIVED

SEP 18 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Please place the attached transcript into the record of CC docket 99-294.

No. of Copies rec'd
List A B C D E

071

UNITED STATES FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

RECEIVED

SEP 18 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

IN RE: MOUNTAIN WEST REGIONAL)
FIELD HEARING)
)

Volume: 1
Pages: 1 through 158
Place: Cheyenne, Wyoming
Date: June 23, 2000

HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

Official Reporters
1220 L Street, N.W., Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20005-4018
(202) 628-4888
hrc@concentric.net

MOUNTAIN WEST REGIONAL
FIELD HEARING

TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING PROCEEDINGS

This matter came on for hearing on the 23rd day of June, 2000, at 8:20 a.m., at the Little America Hotel & Resort, 2800 West Lincolnway, Cheyenne, Wyoming, with Commissioner Furtney presiding.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 COMMISSIONER FURTNEY: I want to extend
3 a warm Wyoming welcome to each of you for choosing
4 to attend this Mountain West Regional Field Hearing
5 sponsored by the Federal-State Joint Conference on
6 Advanced Telecommunications Services.

7 My name is Steve Furtney, and I'm a
8 commissioner with the Wyoming Public Service
9 Commission and a member of the Federal-State Joint
10 Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services
11 and a cochair of this conference. I'll give you a
12 little bit of information about the reason I got
13 involved in this. I applied for appointment to this
14 joint conference because of the importance of
15 telecommunications services to the people and
16 businesses of Wyoming and our neighboring states
17 like Montana and South Dakota, which face very
18 similar challenges in order to successfully deploy
19 advanced broadband telecommunications services.

20 We had a collaborative hosted by the Montana
21 people on Wednesday. We had a bus trip yesterday,
22 which began in the vibrant Denver metro area about
23 100 miles south of here and proceeded north along
24 the Colorado front range into southeastern Wyoming.
25 And I think it was very obvious the change in the

1 population density as we made that trip north. I
2 think the bus tour very clearly demonstrated the
3 contrast in telecommunication service availability
4 between two neighboring states located -- in
5 locations not more than 100 miles apart.

6 The panelists on our panels this morning
7 will -- the purpose is to discuss both the
8 successful deployment of advanced telecommunications
9 services and also to point out the remaining
10 challenges that we face in these rural areas in
11 providing advanced telecommunications services. It
12 is the intent of this joint conference that the
13 hearing be a forum for open dialogue between the
14 panelists and the questioners and that this will
15 result in a candid discussion about both the
16 successful deployment of advanced telecommunications
17 services and the barriers which currently continue
18 to exist and prevent further deployment at this
19 time.

20 It is my sincere hope that this conference
21 will help lead to the necessary public policy
22 changes required to eliminate any and all digital
23 divides and allow all Americans, including those in
24 rural, high-cost-to-serve areas, to enjoy access to
25 comparable advanced telecommunications services at

1 truly reasonable prices.

2 At this time, I'd like to introduce some of
3 the other people that are cochairing and cohosting
4 this Mountain West Regional Field Hearing. I ask
5 that they each share a few remarks about their own
6 perspective on the deployment of advanced
7 telecommunications services.

8 And I'd like to begin with Federal
9 Communications Commission Commissioner Harold
10 Furchtgott-Roth. Commissioner Roth assumed his
11 Commission responsibilities in November of 1997.

12 And, Commissioner, we appreciate your
13 commitment as a member of the joint conference in
14 joining us to cochair this Mountain West Regional
15 Field Hearing on Advanced Telecommunications
16 Deployment.

17 Please join me in welcoming Commissioner
18 Furchtgott-Roth.

19 (Applause.)

20 COMMISSIONER FURCHTGOTT-ROTH: Thank
21 you, Steve.

22 It is a great honor for me to be here in
23 Wyoming today for this field hearing. It's labeled
24 mountain west, but as I look at the people who have
25 participated, it might more aptly be described as

1 just generally west and generally rural. We're very
2 pleased to have folks both from Wyoming and Montana,
3 both from states throughout the west.

4 I would particularly like to thank you,
5 Steve, Commissioner Furtney, Chairman Ellen Becker
6 from the Wyoming Public Service Commission for
7 hosting and putting a lot of effort into this event.
8 And I know a lot of folks on your staff have been
9 working tirelessly over the past many months on
10 this; Dave Mosier, Dave Walker, D.L. Sherman. And
11 the same can be said for the Montana Public Service
12 Commission, Chairman Rowe and his staff there,
13 Bonnie Lorang, Jay Driscoll, and Rhonda Simmons. A
14 lot of work has gone into preparing this field
15 hearing, and I think it's been a resounding success.
16 We've learned a lot, and there's a lot more to be
17 learned today.

18 We're very fortunate to have with us today,
19 also, Chairman Nan Thompson from the Alaska Public
20 Service Commission. She chairs the State Joint
21 Conference.

22 This is the fifth and final one of these
23 field hearings that have been held in each of the
24 regions around the country. And so far, I think
25 we've learned a lot about what works for the

1 deployment of advanced services and, frankly, at
2 times, what doesn't work.

3 We're also very pleased to have with us
4 Commissioner Nelson from the South Dakota Public
5 Service Commission, one of the other sponsors of the
6 Regional Field Hearing.

7 And we have -- this is not just about
8 participation from -- from the public sector. Many
9 of the witnesses today and -- and many of the people
10 who participated both Wednesday and yesterday are
11 from the private sector.

12 I must say the bus tour from the Denver
13 airport up here yesterday -- I couldn't help but
14 think about Senator McCain's Straight Talk Express.
15 The difference here was we didn't have the media
16 there trying to learn more about the candidate. But
17 what we did have were people from all elements of
18 business, people who, in the marketplace, compete
19 vigorously with one another. At times, I was under
20 the impression some of these people never even
21 talked to each other and, yet, we put them all on a
22 bus and shared a lot of information. And it was --
23 it was quite an experience.

24 But the general purpose of these field
25 hearings is not to come up with solutions for the

1 FCC to march in and come to the rescue. I'm frankly
2 very skeptical that that will happen. What this is
3 about is -- is sharing information, finding out what
4 works, what doesn't work. John F. Kennedy once
5 said, Ask not what your country can do for you but
6 what you can do for your country. And the way I
7 look at these field hearings is ask not what your
8 country can do for you but what you can do for
9 yourselves.

10 A lot of the problems with advanced
11 telecommunications services in the west and
12 throughout rural America are going to have to be
13 solved the old-fashioned way, which means you can
14 ask Washington to help, but a lot of times, the
15 folks in Washington frankly just don't get it. And
16 by the time they get it, it will be too late. And
17 so I'm here to find out what -- what works.

18 And with that, shall I pass the mike on to
19 Bob?

20 COMMISSIONER FURTNEY: Thank you,
21 Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth.

22 The next person I'd like to introduce is
23 Montana Commissioner Bob Rowe. This joint
24 conference is largely due to the initiative that
25 Commissioner Rowe took in leading a charge to

1 request that the Federal Communications Commission
2 form this joint conference to look at the deployment
3 of advanced telecommunications services throughout
4 the country. Bob is currently the president of our
5 national organization, the National Association of
6 Regulatory Utility Commissioners. And I cannot
7 think of another state commissioner anywhere in the
8 country that works any harder or is more committed
9 to the NARUC national organization than Bob Rowe.

10 I personally, Bob, want to tell you how much
11 I appreciate all the work that you do on behalf of
12 the state commissions.

13 And please join me in welcoming Commissioner
14 Bob Rowe from Montana.

15 (Applause.)

16 COMMISSIONER ROWE: Thank you very
17 much.

18 I do want to start by thanking Steve, in
19 particular, who's worked so hard on this event for
20 so many months and who, as an economist and a
21 commissioner in a rural state, has an awful lot to
22 teach many of us.

23 I'm eager to hear the governor's remarks, as
24 well, because of the very bold path that Wyoming has
25 taken in this area. That's really helped us all

1 identify what -- what we can do on our own and
2 where, perhaps, we -- we can't move ahead on our
3 own. Wyoming has been very courageous in so many
4 ways.

5 I particularly want to thank Commissioner
6 Furchtgott-Roth. Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth's
7 commitment to rural America is absolutely beyond
8 question. He's stated that and demonstrated that so
9 many times. And he speaks as eloquently as anyone
10 about what markets can do and believes very
11 sincerely in that. He also speaks very eloquently,
12 and, I must say, for an economist, very, very
13 clearly, about what economic methods cannot do, what
14 the limitations are.

15 This was proposed as a cooperative
16 federalist exercise to learn what is really
17 happening in urban as well as rural America. The
18 issues are just as real in urban areas, although
19 often different. What's really happening and what
20 the needs are, what public policy can do, and also
21 what public policy cannot do or needs to do
22 differently or, in some cases, needs to -- needs to
23 stop doing, but more importantly, and, again, as
24 Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth said, what providers
25 and what communities are actually doing on their

1 own.

2 I hope one of the things that will come out
3 of this is perhaps the kind of information sharing
4 and strategy sharing that goes on between
5 communities, between providers. And if one of the
6 things we do is simply help to get that information
7 out there to deal with issues of, in our case, both
8 density or lack of density and dispersion, but also
9 demand site issues and community issues, I think we
10 will have done an awful lot of good.

11 Over the last few days, coming from Montana
12 to Denver and then up here, it's been very clear
13 that the -- the tone, the level of awareness, and
14 the substance are all quite different than they
15 would have been two years ago or certainly four
16 years ago. There's a much higher awareness of what
17 the issues are, a very strong commitment to deal
18 with those, and a lot of enthusiasm, too, as people
19 talk about the projects that they're working on.
20 There's really been a tremendous amount of progress
21 in so many ways, and often by small communities and
22 providers taking some real risks in going out, up,
23 and ahead of the demand and with technology that's
24 really just coming out the door. That's exciting to
25 see. That's something we can't do on the public

1 side. That's something that has to come from the
2 private side. I want to congratulate many of you in
3 this room who are taking those risks and working
4 hard to provide that service.

5 Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER FURTNEY: Thank you,
7 Commissioner Rowe.

8 Also with us this morning is Alaska
9 Commissioner Nan Thompson. And this is a little bit
10 of a change to the program that was put out.
11 Wyoming's U.S. Representative Barbara Cubin was
12 originally scheduled to be here, but because of
13 floor votes going on in -- with Congress in
14 Washington, she was unable to make it. And to fill
15 that void, to have great questions asked up here,
16 I've asked Alaska Commissioner Nan Thompson to join
17 us as one of the questioners, as well. Nan is the
18 chair of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, and
19 she is also the state cochair of the Federal-State
20 Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications
21 Services. Please join me in welcoming Nan Thompson.

22 (Applause.)

23 COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: Thank you. I'm
24 happy to be here in another rural state.

25 This joint conference represents a unique

1 collaboration between federal and state regulators
2 to a problem that all of us here in this room
3 understand. This is the last of the regional
4 hearings that we on the joint conference have
5 sponsored. The goals of the joint conferences was
6 to determine how the mandates of Section 706 of the
7 Telecommunications Act could best be fulfilled; that
8 is, deployment of advanced services to all
9 Americans. We in the joint conference decided to
10 approach that daunting task with a two-pronged
11 effort.

12 The first was these regional field hearings,
13 to go different places in the country and highlight
14 success stories, successful strategies developed on
15 a local level that have deployed advanced services,
16 to identify the different regulatory barriers, the
17 cost barriers, why advanced services weren't being
18 deployed in currently underserved areas, and to
19 learn about unique strategies that might be
20 successful in other places in the country.

21 The other prong of our effort was to gather
22 data. And I want to encourage all of you to respond
23 to a survey that we've got posted on our web site.
24 You can reach the joint conference web site through
25 the FCC's web site. It's FCC, dot, gov, and then a

1 forward slash, joint conference, all one word. Our
2 goal in that is to create a database that would be
3 acceptable to folks in the country everywhere, where
4 both providers and other regulators can search and
5 look for examples of situations similar to the ones
6 they're encountering and find out how the problem
7 has been solved somewhere else. It's a quick
8 survey. It will take you about ten minutes to
9 complete. But the information you submit will be
10 compiled and then accessible to everyone else in the
11 country. I think the accessible part of it is going
12 to go up in a couple of weeks. And it should be a
13 good resource, we hope, for folks everywhere in the
14 country who are trying to determine the best way to
15 get advanced services deployed.

16 I am looking forward to hearing this morning
17 from the panelists and other speakers. These
18 regional hearings have been a very useful tool for
19 us on the joint conference. We've all learned a
20 lot, and I think we're here to listen again today.

21 Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER FURTNEY: Thank you, Nan.

23 Another change to the program does not
24 accurately list our next guest. South Dakota
25 Commissioner -- Commission Chair Jim Burg was unable

1 to attend the hearing, and South Dakota Commissioner
2 Pam Nelson graciously agreed to fill in and
3 cohost -- and help cohost the Mountain West Regional
4 Field Hearing. Commissioner Nelson has a very long
5 history of public service in the state of South
6 Dakota. Please join me in welcoming Commissioner
7 Pam Nelson.

8 (Applause.)

9 COMMISSIONER NELSON: Good morning.

10 And thank you, Steve.

11 It's wonderful to have Commissioner
12 Furchtgott-Roth near the edge of rural America. And
13 I've always thought it was important for
14 decision-makers to experience firsthand the
15 challenges facing them and those who they represent.

16 If we were to move a bit to the north, the
17 east, or the -- the west, we would be right where
18 the next town is 50 miles away, has 300 people, and
19 the hotel is the monopoly.

20 Someone asked me last night if I had -- if I
21 could only tell Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth two
22 things, what those two things would be. And I've
23 given that a lot of thought before I came, and I
24 started giving it more serious thought last night.
25 And it was really hard to come down with two things,

1 but I came up with three or four.

2 The message that South Dakota would like
3 Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth to bring back to
4 Washington is not unlike the message that I heard
5 when I attended the regional field hearings in --
6 the Iowa-Nebraska field hearings a few weeks ago.
7 The 1996 Telecommunications Act has mandated
8 universal service. The public policy issue has been
9 decided and resolved. Section 706 did not
10 equivocate on who should receive advanced services.
11 It clearly states all Americans. Bringing broadband
12 services to the high cost rural areas will require a
13 federal -- federal funding mechanism that is
14 predictable, sustainable, sufficient, and that
15 rewards investment in our infrastructure.

16 Broadband services are the technology of
17 today, not the technology of sometime in the future.
18 As we continue to move towards a more global
19 economy, citizens in rural areas are finding that
20 they're getting left behind. This is not in their
21 best interest, and it is not in the best interest of
22 our nation to leave the people in our rural areas
23 who -- hamstrung by those people who are providing
24 our most basic necessities. The market did not
25 bring plain old telephone services to rural America.

1 It didn't bring rural electricity to rural America.
2 And the market will not bring broadband services to
3 rural America. Rural America cannot afford to be
4 left behind or to wait for advanced services.

5 I think that isn't exactly two things I'd
6 like Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth to take back, but
7 we think that the issue is clear. The public policy
8 issue has already been decided. The issue is really
9 reasonable and affordable and how do we pay for it.

10 Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER FURTNEY: Thank you,
12 Commissioner Nelson.

13 (Applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER FURTNEY: At this time, it
15 is my special honor to introduce the governor of
16 Wyoming to give the keynote address for this
17 Mountain West Regional Hearing. Actually, Governor
18 Geringer is quite responsible for my role in this
19 effort. One of his visions for the state is that
20 advanced telecommunications technology is indeed one
21 of the pillars on which the future of the state of
22 Wyoming depends. He is a leader who has made the
23 deployment of telecommunications technology one of
24 the very top priorities of his administration.
25 Because of the high priority he has given

1 telecommunications technology, the Wyoming
2 commission has also made deployment of advanced
3 telecommunications services a top priority. Please
4 join me in welcoming Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer.

5 (Applause.)

6 GOVERNOR GERINGER: Thank you. Thank
7 you. I appreciate the opportunity to join you today
8 and discuss a very important issue to the west.

9 Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth, welcome to
10 Wyoming. We're pleased that you're here and a
11 willing participant, in fact an advocate, for
12 advanced telecommunications services in the west.

13 Our first lady, Sherri, has, in the past,
14 encouraged young people in school to write about
15 what they think our country will be like and our
16 state will be like 25 years from now. And I wanted
17 to at least alert you to that, because the young
18 people in our state are like the young people in
19 many other states. They're looking forward to what
20 technology can bring. And they see that in a
21 variety of different ways. One youngster wrote back
22 that in the year 2025, that we will all have
23 embedded computers and we will just plug into
24 various things and our daily activities will be
25 well-known and well-directed. Another one, though,

1 had a little bit different perspective. In the year
2 2025 -- she said that, In the year 2025, I might be
3 governor; and if I can't be governor, then I'll be
4 president. Of course, I kind of like that sequence.
5 But then she said, And if I can't be president, then
6 I'll be zookeeper in Oklahoma City.

7 We are in the Rocky Mountain west. And it's
8 not just those states that are in the Rockies or
9 adjacent to the Rockies. We, of course, have
10 concerns and have had participation in our western
11 activities from a variety of states, as is evidenced
12 today with South Dakota. We have membership in our
13 Western Governors' Association from North Dakota,
14 from Kansas, and Texas, which are hardly associated
15 with the Rocky Mountain west but certainly are
16 associated with a lot of what we call rural. But
17 even in that context, the western states include the
18 most populated state and the least populated state.
19 So even there, we understand, in our western
20 activities, that there are quite a bit of -- we have
21 substantial differences on how we can approach our
22 problem solving.

23 So picking up a cue from Commissioner
24 Nelson, I'd say a couple of things that I would
25 point out immediately in kind of a warmup to my

1 remarks. What's working? What we believe is really
2 working is the creative and innovative spirit of the
3 west. If you look at the -- the primary innovation
4 activities that are going on with the new economy,
5 far -- by far the majority of that is occurring in
6 our western states. So we know that that spirit of
7 creativity and innovation is alive and working in
8 the west. And we'd like to build on that.

9 With the commentary that you'll hear today
10 in this hearing, I'm sure that you'll hear from
11 people who are quite concerned about what's not
12 working. But I'd like to put it in the context
13 that, in the west, we understand that we are not
14 looking for total dependence on government. In
15 fact, that's probably the least thing you'll see in
16 the west as a desirable thing. Nor are we looking
17 for total independence, because if we all operated
18 independently of each other, we certainly wouldn't
19 have the leverage of each other's capability. So we
20 look for partnerships, that interdependence that
21 builds a mutual benefit. That's what is working.

22 What's not working are some of the
23 processes. If we can keep our focus on what our end
24 result ought to be, then I think we'll understand a
25 lot about the context of the comments this morning

1 about what's not working. And, frankly, what's not
2 working has much more to do with process and how we
3 approach the end result than any other single thing.
4 For instance, the Universal Service Fund allocation
5 and the rural state modeling is quite -- well, it's
6 just bad. I'll put it that way. The -- and the FCC
7 definition of basic services, I think, also needs to
8 be addressed. So in that context, I'd like to
9 address some remarks.

10 With regard to the basic definition, which,
11 if we were to ask the question what is advanced
12 telecommunications services, you have to premise
13 that on some definition of what's basic. Otherwise,
14 you don't have a definition of what is advanced.
15 Well, for starting points, the definition of basic
16 service is given in the FCC '97 rule. A single
17 party service voice grade access to the public
18 switch network. And it includes access to emergency
19 services, operator services, interexchange services,
20 directory assistance, and toll limitations for
21 qualifying low income consumers. But that really
22 relates to what we have affectionately known in the
23 past as POTS, plain old telephone service. But if
24 we don't realize where we are with the new economy
25 and the capabilities of technology, we won't have

1 POTS. We will have ordinary, obsolete phone
2 service, or OOPS.

3 Mr. Chairman, the notice of inquiry that the
4 FCC adopted in February of this year, I thought, was
5 very apt in its questions that were addressed that
6 ought to be answered in these regional hearings.
7 I'd like to address some of those questions in the
8 context of what we've come to know in America as the
9 new economy. Now, just as the definition for
10 advanced telecommunications services, what's --
11 what's this new economy? It's the key buzzword that
12 seems to be out there. And for that matter,
13 what's -- what's the new community that results from
14 that new economy? The new economy is dot-com or
15 it's DSL or it's ATMCRS or it's all kind of
16 acronyms, or it might be the latest high-tech gadget
17 or connectivity that seems to have a new rollout
18 each day.

19 Well, it's not just new technology or the
20 new technology businesses that represents a new
21 economy. The new economy and what I would call the
22 new community is how we need and use information in
23 every part of our lives; in our businesses, in our
24 workplace and schools, at home, entertainment,
25 government services, health care, public -- public

1 safety. Boiled down in three major categories, that
2 would be the economy, the community, and services.
3 And it's not just -- it's not as easy as saying we
4 have a new economy that's based on certain kinds of
5 businesses. Even what we would refer to as old
6 economy very much has to adapt to new rules
7 concerning how we receive information, how we use
8 that information, which, in turn, then leads to how
9 we will base our decisions. We're overwhelmed with
10 information today. What we need are better tools to
11 enable better decisions.

12 Part of what we ought to talk about today in
13 terms of what's working and what's not has to do
14 with timing and timeliness. It's government's role,
15 as we view it in the majority here in Wyoming, to
16 enable, not to substitute for individual effort and
17 not to be the total subsidy for what needs to be
18 done, but to help build capacity, build equity in a
19 way that recognizes that particularly in this new
20 economy, that timing and timeliness can mean the
21 difference between success and failure.

22 For beginning purposes, then, I would say
23 that the FCC rule on core or designated services is
24 already obsolete and really ought to be changed to
25 include what today is being viewed as advanced

1 telecommunications services. And I put that in the
2 context mostly of data. But as in the past, we've
3 talked about connectivity; that is, voice, video,
4 and data. Where data is present, data transmission
5 capability is present, you will almost automatically
6 enable voice transmission.

7 So as a beginning suggestion, Chairman
8 Furchtgott-Roth, I suggest that the FCC propose and
9 adopt a new definition of basic service that would
10 include data as being an essential element, not just
11 an advanced element, of connectivity in being able
12 to survive in the new economy and encourage our new
13 communities. Because as we look at the developments
14 that have come about, we've all heard the growing
15 increase in retailing on-line or e-tailing or
16 e-commerce or whatever it might be. We are seeing
17 more and more of that attracting public attention --
18 and, yes, it is a very large segment of what's going
19 on through the Internet -- and how it's affecting
20 our retail experience all the way from government
21 taxation down to main street business. But business
22 to business enterprises will dwarf what's going on
23 even trendwise in e-business and e-tailing today.
24 Upstream suppliers, financing, and downstream
25 brokers and marketers will all require connectivity

1 using -- and capability of transmitting data. If
2 they don't have that, business will not survive.
3 There is no such thing as a low technology business.
4 There will only be businesses who don't use
5 technology appropriately and will likely not remain
6 in business regardless of whether they are new or
7 old economy.

8 Beyond that, we look at education. Business
9 needs workplace skills that education can and should
10 be providing. We focus primarily, in a lot of
11 public debates, about the shortage of IT workers in
12 America. Government doesn't have enough of them.
13 Teaching doesn't have enough of them. Business
14 doesn't have enough. Yes, it has to do with
15 IT specialties, but it's not just the IT skills that
16 we need. We need IT generalists, those information
17 technology generalists who understand productivity
18 and how technology enhances that. And technology
19 doesn't work without connectivity, and connectivity
20 doesn't work out broadband access. And that is
21 basic, essential service to our education system.
22 We need education connectivity, broadband just to
23 teach. We need it for students to take the
24 initiative to learn. We need it for teacher
25 preparation not only preservice but continuing

1 service. And we certainly need it for parental and
2 community involvement so that we provide the support
3 to our kids in their education system that they
4 need.

5 For the rest of our -- our rural areas --
6 and I guess I ought to at least qualify that. Rural
7 is defined as if you have five people per square
8 mile or more. I think we have at least two states
9 represented here today who are five square -- people
10 per square mile or less. That would be Alaska and
11 Wyoming.

12 Mr. Chairman, that's another thing that
13 ought to be recognized, that with the variety of
14 application in the west and within our individual
15 states -- you're convening this hearing today in
16 Cheyenne. Cheyenne has a population at the last
17 census of 50,008. And thank goodness for the eight,
18 or we would not be designated as a metropolitan
19 statistical area.

20 We have far too many government regulations
21 that prescribe arbitrary boundaries and thresholds.
22 For instance, medical services and the subsidies
23 that are provided through the federal government are
24 predicated on having centers of 100,000 population
25 or more within an hour's drive of any part of any

1 state. Well, obviously, that would eliminate much
2 of the western part of the United States. Likewise,
3 the delivery of services through technology ought to
4 be enabled.

5 And in the area of health care, we are
6 strong believers of community based and home based
7 medical care. The best care, especially for those
8 who are chronically ill or those who have some
9 particular disability or infirmity -- that quality
10 of care is best near home, at home, or whatever can
11 be provided in the community. Without good, solid
12 data connectivity as a basic service, we cannot do
13 that. We cannot extend the capability of our
14 physicians, our health care providers, connect our
15 hospitals with intranetworking and telemedicine.

16 We just lost another hospital in Wyoming
17 within the last month, up in Lusk. Wyoming only has
18 23 counties in the ninth largest geographic state in
19 the union. And one of those counties just lost its
20 hospital, Lusk. We only have two tertiary care
21 hospitals. We have to have the ability to connect
22 our providers, our services, and our people in their
23 communities with health care. So we need ways to
24 extend our medical diagnosis, colloquium among
25 providers, and treatment with a strong belief in

1 community based care.

2 Government services need to connect people
3 more with services on their schedule, not ours.
4 That's the democratization of information that the
5 Internet provides. Yet, again, we don't have
6 access, particularly for the rural areas and the
7 frontier areas, below five people per square mile,
8 so that people have as much control of their
9 government as government has control of them. We
10 are working hard to implement a portal of services
11 for the state. And however that proceeds, the focus
12 that we need to retain is that the service belongs
13 to the public, not to government.

14 Public safety, law enforcement and safety.
15 We attended a Western Governors' conference last
16 week in Hawaii and saw a demonstration by the
17 Sacramento -- I think it was Sacramento County
18 Police Department, at least -- or maybe it was the
19 Sacramento Police Department -- where they
20 demonstrated the use of hand-held palm computers
21 that were wireless, connected to the main office of
22 the police department, so that when a patrolman was
23 dispatched to a public disturbance or a call for
24 help or anything else, that while they were
25 en route, not only in their car but after they have